

COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

MEETING NOTES

February 12, 2001

CORPS OF ENGINEERS NORTHWESTERN DIVISION OFFICES – CUSTOM HOUSE PORTLAND, OREGON

TMT Internet Homepage: <http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/TMT/index.html>

1. Greetings and Introductions.

Cindy Henriksen welcomed everyone to today's conference call, convened February 12, 2001 to discuss operational priorities during the ongoing regional cold snap. The following is a distillation, not a verbatim transcript, of items discussed at the meeting and actions taken. Anyone with questions or comments about these minutes should call Henriksen at 503/808-3945.

2. Discussion of Power System Cold Snap Operations.

Henriksen noted that today's conference call was initiated at BPA's request. MacKay said that, as was discussed at last Wednesday's TMT meeting, the action agencies have been operating the system to meet load while holding to the 130 Kcfs flow cap at Bonneville Dam. Because of current weather conditions, we are no longer able to do that, said MacKay; we are going to have to exceed the one-foot-per-day draft limit at Grand Coulee and exceed 130 Kcfs at Bonneville in order to meet load, unless we can pick up additional generation elsewhere in the system, MacKay said.

What about power purchases? Paul Wagner asked. BPA is attempting to purchase anything we consider to be reasonable-cost energy, MacKay replied. Are there any purchases being made? Henriksen asked. Some – not a lot, MacKay replied. The reason for the limited amount of purchases is...? Henriksen asked. Price and availability, MacKay replied.

I have not yet seen an emergency declaration from BPA, said Henriksen, despite the fact that, if we increase the draft rate at Grand Coulee and begin to exceed 130 Kcfs at Bonneville, such a declaration will be required. If you can increase generation elsewhere in the system by around 500 MW, then it may not be necessary to increase Bonneville flows above 130 Kcfs, MacKay said – basically, we need a break in the weather, and we're also working on a deal to interrupt 400 MW of load with McCook Aluminum.

Basically, the options available to us include increased discharge and generation at Libby and Hungry Horse, increased discharge and generation at Dworshak; we could

also push Grand Coulee harder, said MacKay. We would prefer to limit any response to the Columbia side, for the reasons expressed at last week's IT meeting, Wagner said. Why is that? Henriksen asked. Because there is more direct biological benefit for the listed species from flow augmentation from Dworshak than from any other project, Wagner replied. I would have concerns about the effects of such a Columbia project operation on flows at Vernita Bar, said Jim Nielsen.

Libby and Hungry Horse only can give us another 150 MW, said MacKay. Also, anything that comes out of Libby will not reach Grand Coulee, said Henriksen – it will be captured in Kootenay Lake and would not help the Grand Coulee draft at all. Similarly, water from Hungry Horse would be trapped in Kerr reservoir, said MacKay.

If we continue to draft Grand Coulee at this rate, we will exceed the 130 Kcfs flow cap at Bonneville; that water will be gone, and it will not be available for later flow augmentation, Henriksen said. In response to a question from MacKay, Pat McGrane said it would be acceptable to Reclamation to draft Grand Coulee at a rate of up to 1.5 feet per day, with day defined as a running 24 hour period. So that is one option, said MacKay; however, to implement it, we will need to declare a power emergency.

In response to a question from Wagner, MacKay said Dworshak has a higher H over K value relative to the Federal power system than Grand Coulee, so if generation is picked up at Dworshak project, it could potentially reduce the draft rate at Grand Coulee.

If folks are happy with drafting Grand Coulee at a higher rate, MacKay said, that is an option that would satisfy our power needs. We would need a power emergency declaration, said Henriksen. Yes, we would, MacKay replied, adding that such an operation would probably need to continue for several days. The problem is that drafting Grand Coulee harder than we have been will limit our options if something happens later – we'll have to find water and generation from another source, MacKay said. If the 400 MW McCook Aluminum deal doesn't work out, she said, we're going to have to re-think the Grand Coulee operation – it is a short-term solution at best.

We're looking for temperatures next week to continue to average 6 degrees below normal, MacKay said. What has changed since last week, when we were able to meet load and maintain 130 Kcfs in the lower river despite the fact that temperatures were lower? Henriksen asked. We had the 240 MW LCA exchange, in which they were returning power to us, MacKay replied – also, Canada is drawing more heavily on its entitlement exchange this week than they were last week.

Shall we recap where we are? Henriksen asked. First, it sounds as though BPA will be declaring a power emergency. It also sounds as though the TMT's preference is to draft Grand Coulee more heavily, rather than finding water and generation elsewhere in the system, MacKay said. In response to a question from Nielsen, MacKay said it would be possible to save any water released from Dworshak in the upper Columbia side of the system, but any water released from Grand Coulee will simply be gone – it won't be available later in the spring and summer season.

Nielsen asked about the impacts of such a Grand Coulee operation on the Vernita Bar minimum flow operation; it was agreed that BPA will attempt to analyze those effects. When will you be able to provide that information on Vernita Bar? Henriksen asked. We can look at the effects of the 1.5-foot-per-day draft over a week, two weeks or more, MacKay said. Perhaps we can make that an agenda item for Thursday's IT/TMT meeting, Bettin suggested.

Up to this point, the understanding was that the Vernita Bar agreement was implementable this year, said Nielsen – if that's changed, we need to talk about it. Again, we can talk about that on Thursday, Bettin said. That would be my preference, said Henriksen.

Do we want to consider bringing Dworshak up to 2.5 Kcfs, to max out generation on the small units? MacKay said. My concern is that we are running Grand Coulee so close to its limits, she said – running at least some water out of Dworshak would help reduce that draft at Grand Coulee. One large unit at Dworshak would give us about 100 MW of additional generation, MacKay said. I assume this decision about Dworshak won't be made until Thursday? Steve Pettit asked. We need the power right now, MacKay replied. Henriksen added that Dworshak has the highest refill probability of any storage project in the system – about 70%.

In response to a question from Henriksen, MacKay said that, if the decision is made to draft Dworshak, that operation will need to continue at least through this Friday. So that would leave Dworshak in the 60% - 65% refill probability range, Henriksen said. However, it will preclude the potential use of Dworshak for spring flow augmentation, Wagner observed – anything we take out of that project now will make refill less likely this year.

In response to a question from Pettit, Henriksen said Dworshak inflow is currently low enough that, at 1.3 Kcfs minimum discharge, the project is essentially passing inflow. How will another 1 Kcfs help Grand Coulee? Pettit asked. It will help some, MacKay replied; again, it would be 100 MW that doesn't have to come from Grand Coulee. In addition, said Henriksen, Dworshak releases can generate more system power from the same amount of water than any other project in the system – Dworshak releases can generate twice the Federal system power from a single unit of water than would be generated by a comparable release from Grand Coulee.

You know our feelings about drafting Dworshak, said Pettit – we share NMFS' position. We can appreciate your perspective on the energy side, said Wagner; however, from a fisheries perspective, we would prefer that Dworshak discharge not be increased at this time.

MacKay suggested increasing Dworshak discharge by one large generating unit through Friday. If the McCook (aluminum) deal falls through, she said, again, we'll need to talk about the operation further on Thursday. And should we consider drafting Grand

Coulee somewhere between one foot and 1.5 feet per day? Henriksen asked. That would be our preference, said MacKay; again, however, the question is whether we want to exceed 130 Kcfs at Bonneville, which we will do if we draft Dworshak slightly and exceed the one foot-per-day draft limit at Grand Coulee.

I'm not comfortable changing operations at the headwater storage projects without a power emergency declaration from Bonneville, said Henriksen – even if there is an alternative operation that does not cause us to exceed 130 Kcfs, we would still like to have an emergency declaration. I'll check on that and get back to you, MacKay said.

To summarize, then, said Henriksen, we need a power emergency declaration no matter what the flow is at Bonneville; does NMFS agree? That's probably appropriate, Wagner replied; such an operation would run counter to the long-term strategy and priorities we've been discussing. One thing we can do is pick up generation at Hungry Horse and Libby to that next increment, MacKay said. That would still require the declaration of a power system emergency, Henriksen said. I don't believe that's what the executives agreed to on Friday, said MacKay, but again, we can discuss it and get back to you.

So BPA needs another 500 MW of generation, said Henriksen; price and availability mean purchasing that energy is not an option. BPA would like to increase generation on the federal system by 500 MW, Henriksen said; one option is to increase the draft at Grand Coulee to 1.5 feet per day, which will cause us to exceed 130 Kcfs in Bonneville flow.

We also talked about the possibility of increasing Dworshak discharge through Friday, Henriksen said; again, we can discuss that operation, as well as any other changes we make to the current operation, at Thursday's TMT/IT meeting.

How do the other parties feel about the requested Dworshak operation? Henriksen asked. If a power emergency is declared, BPA can make that call, if they feel that is the best and most efficient use of that water, Wagner replied. David Wills of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Jim Nielsen of WDFW said they agree with NMFS' assessment. Christine Mallette said Oregon agrees that a power emergency declaration is needed before any changes are made in the operation of the headwater storage projects; Pettit said that would be Idaho's position as well.

Idaho? Henriksen asked. What exactly are we voting on? Pettit asked. Increasing Dworshak discharge by 5 Kcfs to run the large generating unit at that project, Henriksen replied. Pettit said he is not at liberty to agree to such an operation until he talks to Jim Yost. Does Idaho have a counterproposal for how to meet regional load? Henriksen asked. Not at this time, Pettit replied – if a power emergency is declared, then the action agencies can use Dworshak if that is what they feel is appropriate – I assume that Dworshak will be used as necessary, Pettit said. If we are not in a power emergency, he said, then I would like to debate any operational alternatives at Thursday's meeting.

The operation does need to start tomorrow, said MacKay. There are some options – we could pick up 150 MW at Hungry Horse and Libby; we could also talk about running one of the small units at Dworshak, rather than the large unit – that would mean Dworshak was releasing 2.5 Kcfs, rather than 5 Kcfs, she said.

So we do not have an operation for tomorrow? Henriksen asked. I'll call Jim Yost and get back to you later today, Pettit replied. It also sounds as though, from what we've heard from Oregon, Washington, NMFS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, we definitely need a power emergency declaration before we take any additional actions, Henriksen said. That's correct, said Nielsen. In that case, said Jim Litchfield, Montana would likely agree with the position taken by Oregon, Washington, the Fish and Wildlife Service and NMFS.

Where do Libby, Hungry Horse and Dworshak fall in the pecking order? MacKay asked. Pick on Dworshak last, and hit Libby and Hungry Horse first, Wagner replied, with the understanding that, if there is a need, under this power emergency, to draft Dworshak for power purposes, so be it, said Wagner. However, Dworshak has the greatest potential impact on both runs, and the more we run it now, the less it will be available to us later. Again, however, NMFS won't object to BPA using Dworshak now if that's what they have to do, he said.

Unless I'm missing something, it sounds to me as though we're going to need to pick up generation at Libby, Hungry Horse, Grand Coulee *and* Dworshak in order to get the increased generation we need, said Litchfield. That's probably correct, said Bettin – it's probably more important to prioritize which project gets turned off first. There isn't much point, then, in having an academic debate over whether or not Dworshak or Hungry Horse get turned on first, said Litchfield.

After a few minutes of further discussion, Henriksen summarized by saying that changing the operations at the headwater storage projects will require a power emergency declaration; also, she said, what I'm hearing is that it is going to be necessary to increase the draft at all four headwater storage projects in order to meet load – another 5 Kcfs at Libby, another 1 Kcfs at Hungry Horse, another half-foot per day at Grand Coulee and whatever increase might be necessary at Dworshak – either one small unit or one big unit, 2.5 Kcfs or 5 Kcfs. If we run the big unit through Friday, said Henriksen, my guess is that that will draft Dworshak between four and five feet additional by Friday. After a brief debate, Bettin said that, from a planning standpoint, it probably makes sense to plan on running one large unit at Dworshak, an increased draft of 5 Kcfs from that project.

Again, said Henriksen, we are expecting a power system emergency declaration from Bonneville so that we can initiate these operations. They could commence tomorrow, and will run through Friday. We're typing the power emergency declaration even as we speak, said Bettin. And again, there will be additional discussion of the present emergency situation at Thursday's joint TMT/IT meeting, said Henriksen. If Idaho is adamantly opposed to the proposed Dworshak operation, said Henriksen, we could be talking again very soon.

With that, the conference call was adjourned. Meeting notes prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.

3. List of participants:

Scott Bettin	BPA
Dick Cassidy	COE
Margaret Filardo	FPC
Cindy Henriksen	COE
Jim Litchfield	consultant, state of Montana
Robyn MacKay	BPA
Pat McGrane	BOR
Christine Mallette	ODFW
Jim Nielsen	WDFW
Steve Pettit	IDFG
Rudd Turner	COE
Paul Wagner	NMFS
David Wills	USFWS